

S E C R E T

5 May 1976

SUBJECT: COINS - Community On-Line Intelligence System

1. COINS is an interagency network to make possible the sharing of some data bases and files created by Intelligence Community organizations.

2. At the urging of Bill Baker and other PFIAB members in 1965, COINS was established by the DCI on an experimental basis, and a COINS Project Office, located at NSA, was set up by the DCI with USIB member agreement. The Project Office was to do test and development work on a future community-wide system.

3. COINS had a hard life between 1965 and 1972 because the agencies and armed services were in different stages of computerization, and there was no consensus as to the rules and procedures by which materials prepared by one agency should be made broadly available to others. CIA was, and still is, particularly suspicious, and it saw COINS as a device by Defense to get at CIA's internal analyst files.

4. In 1973, Dr. Schlesinger, as DCI, and [redacted], agreed that the latter should become Executive Agent to push COINS ahead and make it operational. The DCI retained a general overview responsibility which he exercised through the IC Staff and the Chairman, Intelligence Information Handling Committee (IHC).

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5. Since 1973, ASD(I) has moved energetically to make COINS more effective. It has been given its own budget and a staff of about 20 people. External contractors have made recommendations, now being carried out, to establish a COINS interagency network, using advanced computer and communications technology. This is called COINS II.

6. Dr. Schlesinger, as DCI, approved including TOP SECRET TALENT/KEYHOLE data in the COINS network, and today over 50% of the total user queries are levied on the NPIC imagery files. Most of the remaining 40-odd COINS files relate to [redacted]

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7. Other than NPIC, CIA has contributed only 3-4 files, and has strongly resisted a larger commitment to COINS. CIA analysts have not found COINS data very useful to them, and the system is still hard to use (pending technical improvements that are a year or two away).

8. ASD(I) can be expected to continue to press for greater CIA and DCI involvement in COINS. Feelings are strong on both sides.

S E C R E T

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Remarks: *R2: ITEM #3, JOURNAL, 5/5/76*

A1:

[redacted] called me this a.m. to say that he had a ltr from Ellsworth to Bush on COINS, and would I write a brief blurb to tell Mr. Bush what COINS was about.

Attached is what I gave Ben. He says that the Ellsworth letter will be coming to ICS for action. It's a problem in which DOD and CIA are far apart -- but I guess we have to address it.

[redacted]

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